

TO

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT,

On his Defence at Leicester.

Botley, March 28, 1820.

SIR,

Admiring as I did, and still do, your indignant letter, relative to the Manchester Tragedy, I should at this time, have had only to lament, that you were likely to be imprisoned for having written it, had you abstained, in your defence, from an unnecessary *attack upon my conduct*. This attack I cannot overlook, or let pass by me in silence: because I have a public character to support as well as you; and because I think that character of as much value to the country as yours is, or ever was.

Your mode of defence was yours, to adopt, or reject, as you pleased. I think the whole of the defence erroneous in its tone; but the *apology*, at the close, is what I was particularly sorry to see. An appeal to and defence of *general conduct* were, in my opinion, beneath you. But, if you thought it becoming in you to go over the history of your own *loyal and orderly political conduct*, it, surely, was not just to bring my conduct forward as a *contrast*, in this respect, with your own!

In order that the matter may stand fairly before the public, I will insert

here the whole of the close, or *peroration*, of your speech; for, it contains matter, which, though quite foreign from the subject before the Court at Leicester, is of very great importance at this time; for, if it be true, that you persevere in asserting the justice and policy of the *Corn Bill*, no time ought to be lost in endeavouring to convince you, that, while you may be, in your heart, a warm friend of the people of this kingdom, you are, in your actions, one of their greatest enemies.

The close of your speech, as I find it in all the newspapers, was in the following words:—

“His object in quoting those recorded opinions of his own was, to prove that such had been his uniform sentiments. Those extracts showed that he had never entertained opinions or sentiments calculated to propagate sedition; but that ever since 1802 he had been doing the very contrary, and endeavouring to unite all classes in order to effect what so many enlightened men considered essential to the welfare of the country. They would not believe him to be seditious upon an unsupported charge. The Attorney-General had said—and he was extremely glad that he had said, that they were to judge of a man from his acts and declara-

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" tions. He appealed to his acts and
 " declarations, and he could not see
 " how, by possibility, they could
 " from these judge that he was
 " evil-minded, malicious, or seditious.
 " These recorded acts of his were
 " better testimony than every
 " person in the world called as
 " witnesses. Let his whole life be
 " inquired into—let every word he
 " ever wrote or uttered be examined
 " —he defied any man to find any
 " sentence inconsistent with those
 " principles. He did not recollect
 " any thing more that he was called
 " upon to remark to them. The great-
 " est part of the Attorney-General's
 " speech he would have no difficulty
 " to reply to, but it was not in Court.
 " The boroughmongers might be cen-
 " sured and opposed without sedition
 " or treason. His conduct amounted
 " to nothing more than this—it was
 " not quite correct to identify them
 " with the Government, in order to
 " charge him with sedition. They
 " were complained of by all; and
 " their most monstrous cruelties would,
 " he trusted, soon have an appro-
 " priate remedy. They were not a
 " part of the government; but if
 " they were, he could not be con-
 " victed, for there was no innuendo in
 " the information that they were part
 " of the government. So it was
 " with the mention of King James,
 " of the soldiers, and every part of
 " the allusion to that period. They
 " were not at all before the Jury.
 " On account of the vagueness and
 " indefiniteness of the charge against
 " him, he was entitled to every pos-

" sible indulgence; but he was still
 " more entitled to that indulgence
 " here, on account of the defective-
 " ness of the information. He had
 " not from malice invented, but he
 " had from perfect conviction stated,
 " that persons had been put to death
 " (at Manchester). He had evidence,
 " which he would offer at least, that
 " the facts were such as he had be-
 " lieved and stated. If they did not
 " believe that he was desirous of in-
 " citing to insurrection, they could
 " not find him guilty. They must
 " first find him mad.—He had spoken
 " in his letter, as he uniformly did, of
 " the Gentlemen of England, whom
 " he always looked on as the guar-
 " dians of the constitution. He had
 " not called on the people, but he
 " had called on all to unite in resist-
 " ing the usurpations and cruelty of
 " an oligarchy. To the King he had
 " sworn allegiance.—To the bo-
 " roughmongers he had sworn none,
 " and never would;—to the borough-
 " mongers he had always declared
 " hostility, and hostility, he ever
 " should declare to them. He was
 " sorry if they did not agree with him,
 " and thought his opinions dangerous;
 " but still, if they did not believe that
 " his intentions had been to incite to se-
 " dition, they would not convict him
 " upon the present charge. What
 " possible motive could he have had
 " for so wicked and stupid a thing?
 " He defied Mr. Attorney to give a
 " colour of credibility to the charge.
 " Mr. Attorney had indeed refuted
 " his own charge, and unless it could
 " be shown that he was mad, it was

" impossible for the Jury to say
 " that his letter had any tendency
 " to sedition. The whole course of
 " his life was in direct opposition to
 " such a charge. On looking back-
 " ward it would be extremely difficult
 " to find *one who had so little listened*
 " *to popular delusions*, or even to
 " what was called *popular opinion*.
 " With popular opinions *he had never*
 " *fallen in*. For instance, on the *Corn*
 " *Bill*, in which the people felt the
 " greatest interest, he had argued
 " *with them that they were in er-*
 " *ror*. In every speech which he
 " had ever uttered in Parliament,
 " or out of Parliament, at public
 " meetings, or on the hustings, he
 " had uniformly shown and recom-
 " mended proper respect to the Royal
 " Family. Even against the Whigs,
 " although acting with them, and
 " voting with them, he had con-
 " tended in Parliament for the
 " same principle. He had al-
 " ways felt anxious that the
 " people should feel affection for
 " the Crown, and the Crown feel
 " no apprehension or fear of the
 " people. He was a Tory so far as
 " to contend for the prerogatives of
 " the King, the executive branch of
 " the Constitution; and he was not
 " for confining the utmost powers
 " which the law allowed to the Crown;
 " but he always had resisted, and al-
 " ways should resist, the undermining
 " power of the boroughmongers and
 " traffickers in seats, who bartered
 " away the liberties of the country at
 " every election. Then he charged

" with undermining the liberty of the
 " country. If that was libel, he
 " pleaded guilty. When he wrote
 " the letter he had learnt that a mili-
 " tary force had been employed in the
 " most unwarrantable manner. He
 " had not addressed it, *as some had*
 " *done, 'to the weaver-boys of Co-*
 " *ventry,'* but to the *enlightened elec-*
 " *tors of Westminster, whose repre-*
 " *sentative he had been*. He had called
 " upon the people to meet, and if
 " numbers made a meeting illegal,
 " the meeting at Westminster must
 " have been illegal. But that meeting
 " had not been disturbed, and only at
 " Manchester had military force been
 " applied. At Smithfield, where Dr.
 " Harrison (the chairman) had been
 " arrested, the meeting terminated
 " tranquilly, and Mr. Hunt, he had
 " no doubt, would in like manner
 " have quietly submitted. At York
 " there had been a large meeting; but
 " as there was no military interfer-
 " ence, there was no disturbance.
 " He had never conceived that num-
 " bers constituted illegality in a meet-
 " ing. His object had been to ascer-
 " tain that they could meet, and not
 " be interrupted. His letter was
 " nothing more than a call to come
 " forward for this object. With what
 " pretence could this be charged to
 " have been done from a seditious
 " and seditious motive, without rea-
 " son or argument, or colour of sense?
 " If the same conduct which might
 " have proceeded from bad mo-

"tives, could be accounted for on
 "good motives, a candid man
 "would not impute bad motives.
 "But when no motive could be con-
 "ceived for his desiring to excite se-
 "dition, and when no other conse-
 "quence resulted from his conduct
 "but a public and peaceable meet-
 "ing, with what pretence could a bad
 "motive be even suspected? If de-
 "lay was dangerous, the Attorney-
 "General ought, pro bono publico,
 "to have prosecuted instantly. But
 "in the whole of this prosecution he
 "felt only one great difficulty—this
 "was the want of a substantial charge.
 "But, be the charge what it might,
 "and be the result what it might, it
 "was to him matter of indifference.
 "All men had their ruling passions,
 "and all passions became so by in-
 "dulgence; he had his ruling passions,
 "and they were of a public kind.
 "Points of law he left to his friends
 "who sat near him. The charge it-
 "self was so bare, so naked, so un-
 "supported, so formed to convey
 "what it did not convey, that it was
 "not worthy of the time bestowed on
 "it. Its supporters were the borough-
 "mongers, who were now the Go-
 "vernment. He should have been
 "ashamed to address them at such
 "length, but that he grasped at the
 "opportunity afforded to him, by
 "being thus called on, to set himself
 "straight in their view. They would
 "go out of Court with different ideas
 "of his character and intentions. The

"Attorney-General they would dis-
 "miss, as Lord Escalus, who presided
 "with Angelo, in the play of 'Mea-
 "sure for Measure' dismissed his
 "officer—

"Angelo.—How now, Sir, what's
 "your name, and what's the matter?

"Elbow.—If it please your Ho-
 "nour, I am the poor Duke's consta-
 "ble, and my name is Elbow; I do
 "lean upon justice, Sir, and do bring
 "in here before your honour a noto-
 "rious benefactor.

"Ang.—Benefactor! What bene-
 "factor is he? Is he not a male-
 "factor?

"Elbow.—What is't your wor-
 "ship's pleasure I shall do with this
 "wicked caitiff?

"Escalus.—Truly officer, because
 "he hath some offences in him,
 "that thou wouldst discover if thou
 "couldst, let him continue in his
 "courses till thou know'st what they
 "are."

I have not quoted this unfortunate
 conclusion of a serious speech by a
 passage from a punning play with any
 ill-natured design, (but) merely be-
 cause I would not be charged with
garbling. The part of your speech,
 which I *complain* of is that, wherein
 you say, that you "had not addressed
 "it (the letter) as SOME had done to
 "the WEAVER BOYS of C^ountry, but
 "to the enlightened Electors of West-
 "minster." I may, perhaps, notice
 this compliment to the Electors of
 Westminster by-and-by. but first,

let us see what this *Weaver Boy* observation fairly amounted to.

Now, Sir, that I, and nobody else, have addressed publicly letters to "*Weaver Boys*," upon the subject of public affairs, is as notorious, in every part of this kingdom, as that your name is Francis Burdett and that my name is William Cobbett. And if you had said: "I addressed my letter to sober and sensible men, not like that seditionous fellow, Cobbett, to ignorant and wild *Weaver Boys*; and, therefore, gentlemen, whatever you may think of Cobbett, pray, observe, that I am a very *different* sort of man, and have very different views:" if you had said this, in so many words, the meaning would not have been more plain: and this will, I am sure, be denied by not one impartial man in the whole kingdom.

As to the facts, I have addressed two letters to "the Weaver Boys of Lancashire;" not of *Coventry*, which error in your allusion, arose, doubtless from the intelligence (relating to my affair at *Coventry*) which had, for some days been continually arriving at Leicester. The title of "*Weaver Boys*" was given to the Lancashire Reformers in general by the Police People of Manchester; and, it was in the way of *defiance*, that I addressed the two letters in question to the "*Weaver Boys*;" and not on the ground of the propriety of appealing to wild and thoughtless boys. The first of these letters was published

in January, 1817. The subject was of a serious and important nature; and the style, tone and manner were suited to the matter and the occasion. The second letter, addressed to the Weaver Boys, was written in the winter of 1819, in Long Island, and published here in the Spring. Its subject was, the very extraordinary proceedings, which followed the death of SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY. This letter is one of the Essays, of which I shall always be proud to be known as the author. It embraces numerous points both as to *morals* and to *law*. It boldly encounters the base cant of the age. Thousands of hypocrites stood ready to *condemn* and *revile*; but, though the author was so far distant from the scene; and though to attack him was so popular as well as so profitable; no one has ever dared to make an attempt to *answer* that letter. Of nearly a *thousand* Registers that I have written, there are only about *fifteen*, I think, of which I am *really* proud; and this Register, on the Inquest on Romilly, is one of those fifteen.

Now, Sir, though I still say, that I admired the *burst of indignation*, contained in your alledged libel, compare it with these two Letters of mine to the "*Weaver Boys*;" and, you will find, I believe, that the latter would have been more worthy of your pen than the former was. Then, again, the Attorney General found *nothing to prosecute* in my Letters,

though his friendship for me cannot be supposed to have exceeded his friendship for you. It was, therefore, mal-apropos, as well as unjust, to endeavour to "*set yourself straight*" with the jury by drawing the Pharisaical contrast. If you chose to assert your own *loyalty* and *orderly conduct*, that you had a right to do. But, you had no right to impute the contrary to me, though it had been to save you from ten times the weight of punishment that you might wish to avoid. If you had thought proper to allude to my conduct at all, you ought to have observed, that, in no one instance, have I ever urged the people to acts of violence; that, in no one instance, has my name been coupled with rioting or mobbing; and that this was more than you could say for yourself! It is, I dare say, true, that you never *advised* a mob to demolish the houses of your adversaries; but it is, nevertheless, undeniable, that your adherents have, on several occasions, committed such acts of violence, and that, too, immediately after having been harangued by you. I do not say, that you did *wrong* in calling the Cold Bath Fields Prison "*the Bastile*," and in suffering many men, day after day, to go from London to the Election at Brentford, with *chains round them*, and rattling those chains on the top of your coaches. I do not say, that this was *wrong*; but this was

the case; and it was not an instance of your great care not to encourage those "*popular delusions*," to which you now so significantly allude, and almost in the words of some of the late Speeches from the Throne and from the Ministers. I do not say, that you *meant disloyally*, and I believe you did not, when, in an address to the Freeholders of Middlesex, you talked of "*hired sheriffs, parliaments, and kings*"; but, you did so talk; and you cannot find, in my letters to the "*Weaver Boys*," any thing of this description. I do not say, that, in *pointing me out*, upon this occasion, you *deliberately meant* to pave the way for a prosecution against me; but, you ought to have been careful not to persecute another, while you were yourself complaining of persecution. If you must resort to *contrasts*; if you must play the Pharisee in politics, you might have picked out *other* subjects for contrasts: you might have fixed upon some one, whose speeches or writings had filled the jails with victims, instead of falling upon the writings of one, who has, from the year 1809 to this day, been the cause of prosecution of no man in any part of the kingdom. You well know all *my thoughts* about public matters. You know me to be as *loyal as yourself* to the full! While, therefore, there was no reason for your singling *me out* upon this occasion, there was, it appears to me,

every reason that could suggest itself to the mind of man, for your avoiding it.

Here I should stop; but, I cannot suffer the above extract to go forth under my hand without a remark or two upon other parts of it, beginning with that part which relates to the *Corn Bill*, which you still seem to regard as a measure of *sound policy*, and as being opposed only by *popular error*, fostered by *delusion*. I will not say, that this topic was introduced by you for the purpose of *conciliating the landholders*, of whom your jury was composed; but, most assuredly it was a matter wholly foreign from the subject before the Court; and if it were proper to introduce it, there was nothing, which it was not proper for the Attorney-General to introduce. However, we have now, being thus challenged by you, to inquire, whether the opposition to the Corn-Bill were a *mob-like* thing or not.

It is well known that no measure ever excited so *loud* and so *general* an opposition. More petitions were presented against it, than against any other bill that ever was brought forward. The Bill was at last passed with troops drawn up round the Parliament House, and for the avowed purpose of protecting the Members against the rage of the people. Your constituents petitioned amongst others. You presented their petition; and, you said, that you were *neither for nor against the Bill*; nor did you vote for it. Lord Castlereagh charged you with equivocating and shuffling.

He said you were *for* the Bill; but had not the frankness to avow it. However, *now* you boast of having been *for* the Bill, and of having, on that occasion, scorned to listen to *popular delusion*.

We will leave undiscussed the question, whether a great *Reformer* acts a very consistent part in boasting that he approved of a bill that was passed in defiance of the petitions of five sixths of the nation: we will leave this out of our view, and confine ourselves to the nature, tendency, and effects of the measure, for having approved of which you take so much merit to yourself.

The Bill professed to have in view the *relief of the farmers*. It was, as we shall by-and-by see, sheer nonsense to propose to effect such an end by such means. But, *has* it relieved the farmers? Are they not more deeply distressed than ever? Have not the sufferings of the labourers and the middle classes been *greater* since that Bill was passed than they ever were before? Will you say, that there are *other causes* at work to produce this misery and to render the benefits of the Corn Bill ineffectual in affording relief? If you say this, it was your duty to *point out those other causes*, and to *endeavour to cause them to be removed, before you were for passing a Corn Bill*. For, why pass a Corn Bill, while such causes remained in operation? Why put the money into the purse, when you knew of the great hole in the bottom?

You were for the Corn Bill with your eyes open. You knew, or had

an opportunity of knowing, *all the causes* that were at work against the restoration of prosperity. With this knowledge, which you possessed, or ought to have possessed; with all those causes before your eyes; with every cause of the farmer's distress full in your view, you approved of the Corn Bill as the means of *relief* to the farmer. Therefore, you cannot now say, that the want of relief has arisen from causes which were too powerful for the Corn Bill: you cannot say this, without acknowledging, that, at best, the Corn Bill was but a mere piece of impudent nonsense, and was passed merely to show, that the people's petitions, though nearly unanimous, might be safely set at nought.

The Corn-Bill having *failed* of its object; and, observe, if you please, that the associations of farmers now declare, that it has done them *harm* instead of good: this being the case, it was to show but very little regard for public opinion to say, at this time of day, that the Corn-Bill was opposed by *popular error* and *delusion*; and to take merit to yourself for having set your face against that *delusion*; when experience has proved, that it was not delusion, which opposed, but which supported, the Bill.

The Bill, like almost every other measure, which has, for years, been adopted, relative to the internal and commercial affairs of the country, was founded on *narrow* views; views such as men in *trade* take of all public mea-

asures, which they can clearly see *affect them*, but cannot see *how*. The farmers found, that they could not pay their *rent* and *taxes*. The landlords wanted the former, and the government, or funding system, or whatever else we may call it, would have the latter. What was to be done? Why, *enable* the farmers to pay high rent and heavy taxes. But how? There was no way but that of enabling them to get a high price for their corn. And one way of effecting this certainly was to *put a stop to the importation of Corn*; or, in other words, to give them a *monopoly*. But, it appears to have been forgotten by the wise-acres, who passed this Bill, that this high price must *fall upon some other part of the community*; and that, finally, whatever was gained by the farmer, through the means of high price, must be taken from him through the means of *poor-rates*, while the manufacturers of the country, loaded with the high price and with all the burthens of taxation, must inevitably go on gradually perishing.

It is useless to say, that great and extended foreign commerce is an *evil*. Ours *was become* great and extended. Every art had been resorted to, in order to make machines do the work of men, and to draw men from the fields into manufacturing establishments. The nation was new-modelled. The small farms were gone. Farming was become a speculating concern in the hands of a few. Therefore, to do any thing, which would, all at once, take away the employment of manufacturers was to throw

all into confusion, or, at least; to produce misery indescribable.

Manufacturers, in such a state of things, must depend on *commerce*, and commerce is, *exchanging one article for another*. It is folly to suppose, that other nations will buy of us to a greater extent *than we buy of them*. The thing can very seldom happen for any length of time. And, if it happen at one time, it must be compensated for at another time. This is a matter which has nothing to do with passion or prejudice, with friendship or enmity: it is a matter of necessity: it is a thing that *must* be so: and, to attempt to controul it by restrictive laws is wholly useless. If we do not receive a given quantity, or amount, of the products of America, for instance, she will not, because she *cannot*, take from us a similar amount of our products. So that the Corn-Bill, as far as it operates as a check to the importation of American flour and meat and timber, also operates as a check to our manufactures; and, if we take the dead stock of inactive machinery into view, this check produces a loss enormous.

Whether it would be a good thing if this body of manufacturers were not in existence, is a question that it would be useless to discuss. They are in existence. They are alive, and have a right to live. At any rate they cannot be gotten rid of. And while this is the case, every thing that tends to prevent articles from being bought in to be exchanged for the work of their hands is, and must be, unwise and mischievous. If, in-

deed, the farmers could sell their dear corn to somebody else besides the people of England, the gains of the land would go to be laid out for the benefit of manufacturers. But, the high price is to be paid *by the rest of this same community*; so that, upon the general scale, nothing is *added* to the national means by the high price, while, if the ports were open, something would be added to those means by the exchange of food for labour, which would prevent a large portion of the poor-rates that now exist.

If a man live as he ought to live, he will consume about 250 pounds of flour and 200 pounds of pork in a year, or some other food equal in point of nutriment. Now, here is a weaver at Coventry, who makes ribbons, when he can get work. Let him get this quantity of flour and pork from America, and the Americans will take the amount out in ribbons. Is not this an advantageous thing to England? The man lives well, and he never troubles the *parish*. His labour produces flour and pork as much as the farmer's man's labour produces flour and pork. His loom enables him to draw his food across the Atlantic, and to set the plough and the flail going there. But, if you will not suffer the American to bring the flour and the pork, the American cannot take the ribbons, his wife and

daughters must do, without these fineries; and, the ribbon-weaver must do without the American flour and pork; he must have half work or less, and must be half-starved.

Aye, say the Corn Bill wise-
acres; but, if FARMER GRIPUM, my lord's tenant, get a high price for his corn and meat, he will have the money, which the American farmer would otherwise have, to buy ribbons with. Yes, he would; but, then, this high price being *paid by the rest of the community*, the rest of the community would have just as much *less* as GRIPUM would have *more*, money to buy ribbons with. The fact, however, is, that GRIPUM would not have more money to buy ribbons, or any thing else, with. His *poor rates* would be augmented, and his *rent* would be augmented; and, if gain rested any where, it would rest with the *owner of the land*, and not with the farmer. And, indeed, this Bill was a Bill wholly in favour of *landlords*, though the native greediness of the farmers made them, and still makes them, eager for it.

Take things upon an average of years, it is *impossible*, that *high price* can be beneficial to a *renting farmer*; because all his out-goings are high, and must be high, in

proportion. He cannot be benefited by high prices so long as his landlord has the power of augmenting his rent, and so long as labour rises with the rise in the produce of the land. But, there are the *taxes*. These continue stationary. To face *them* it must be best to have high prices. This is very true; but, then, observe, *the rest of the community*, being compelled to submit to this high price, will be *less* able to pay taxes than they were before. That which they pay, in addition, for their food, they cannot have to pay taxes with and to lay out in manufactured goods.

Thus, then this famous Corn Bill, which you, Sir, say was opposed by *popular delusion*, to which you *disdained to listen*, was manifestly, as I think, founded, in foolish greediness; and has, as I know, produced prodigious mischief. It proceeded (where the motive was not sheer greediness) upon a wrong notion as to the *cause* of the distress of the farmers; as to the cause of their inability to pay rent and taxes as before. This cause was, not the "*superabundant produce*," as poor Mr. WESTERN called it; but, the diminution, which had then taken place in the quantity of the paper-money; in the consequent rise of the value of

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that money; and the consequent additional real demand made on the farmer for *taxes*, and also for *rent*, in case of a lease extending beyond the year. This was the *cause* of the distress; and, how was a cause like this to be counteracted by a Corn Bill?

This doctrine, which I alone held at the time, is now generally acknowledged to be true; and, therefore, it is, at this time of day, a little too much to hear you putting forward, as *a merit*, your having treated the opposition to the Corn Bill as having proceeded from *popular error and delusion*!

You may talk, Sir, of *parliamentary reform*, as long as you please; but, you will never make me believe, that you are sincere, until I see you *propose some measure likely to lead to it*. How is it to be obtained? By *force of arms*? That you are anxious to disclaim; and well you may, when you look at the military attitude of those who wish not to have a reform. How, then? By *soft persuasion*? By speeches made by you, Mr. Hobhouse, young Mr. Whitbread, Sir Robert Wilson, and Mr. Lambton? Alas! go, first, and try your harangues upon wolves in a sheep-fold; or upon a kite that has just made a successful dash amongst a

brood of chickens. Do you still hope to gain over to you "*the Gentlemen of England*?" What, to begin with, do you think of the *twelve*, whom you had the honour to address at Leicester? Where, then, is your reliance? On the Fox-hunters? They may, as to most other matters, be stupid enough; but, let them but get the slightest scent of you on the *reform track*, and they will show you, that they are as cunning as the animal they live to pursue. They are, nine out of every ten, tyrants in their very nature; and all their familiar bawling and boozing do not diminish their arrogance and insolence towards those whom they are able to oppress.

Who, then, are you to *persuade* to join you? I cannot imagine, for my part, any project more wild. REFORM will never take place, until the *paper-fabrick* be well shaken; and, if you would hasten a reform, you must attack that fabrick, and this, as you never yet have attempted it, so, I fear, you will not now attempt it. There are too many *ties* that bind you, and all the new heroes, to *the system*. These ties you might break, if you would; but you cannot break them, without an effort, such as I have no hope of.

seeing you make. I know, that the paper fabrick will go to pieces. Reform will then come; but, it will not have been brought by you, and you will not, it is my opinion, have much to say in the final settlement of the affair.

The way to go work *now*, is, to propose some distinct measure, *levelled directly at the paper-fabrick*. It would not be instantly adopted; perhaps never. But, it would be *discussed*; and by discussion the minds of men would be prepared for the event. But, as to *speeches about reform*, what are they *now* to produce? For, who is there in the whole world, that can possibly believe, that this nation is to be restored to *prosperity* merely by a change in the mode of electing Members of Parliament? That change is, indeed, necessary to the restoration of prosperity; but the change cannot take place, until the paper-fabrick be shaken; and as to keeping up this fabrick *after a reform has taken place*, the very thought ought to consign a man to Bedlam.

I have no hope of any change, which does not emanate from this source. PAINE said, in 1796, that the question was, *not how long [the Borough system would last; but, how long the Funding system would last: and, every day,*

from that day to this, has made this truth more and more evident. *A thousand pounds*, therefore, expended, in order to get young Mr. WHITBREAD into parliament, though it may be very proper so to expend it, will do nothing towards restoring the country to freedom, unless we should, to our agreeable surprise, find that this young man has something to propose to shake the stock-jobbing concern; and that he has the ability and industry to produce a great impression on men's minds by the matter that he brings forward. If he do no more than his father did, of what *use* will he be? He may make very pretty speeches, and may *rail* against Ministers in good round sentences; but, if he produce no effect; if he merely obtain the applause of the unthinking; if the *System* be wholly *unshaken* by him, his efforts will be as useless, and nearly as ridiculous, as a dog's baying the moon.

I should very much like to have from you, Sir, an answer to this plain question: *Do you wish the interest to continue to be paid to the full to the fundholders?* If I had your answer to this question, I should, at once, be able to say, whether any hope can be entertained of you, or not. You may

say, that is a question to be here-
 after discussed. By no means. It
 is the preliminary question.
 Without coming to a decision
 on that, it is nonsense to talk
 about a Reform of the Parliament;
 because this latter never can take
 place as long as, by no matter
 what means, that interest shall be
 paid to the full. If I was a fund-
 holder, and had my interest duly
 paid me, and had to depend on
 this for my living at my ease,
 would I listen to any proposition
 for *changing the managers* of the
 nation's affairs? I believe not in-
 deed! There are about three
 hundred thousand fundholders.
 These, or the far greater part of
 them, hate the Sinecure and Pen-
 sion Gentry as much as I do; but,
 they are embarked in the same
 boat: they must swim along with
 those they hate, or sink: and,
 therefore, they are strenuously op-
 posed to *any change* in the system.
 The *Seat-owners* would, doubtless,
 give up their mere *power* with re-
 luctance. But, do you think, that
 they never look at their *estates*,
 and consider how far they are
 pledged for the payment of the
Debt? The fundholders have fre-
 quently reminded them, that these
estates are so pledged. It is easy
 to see; nay, every body *now* says
 that the interest of the *Debt*

cannot be much longer paid with-
 out a resort to *extraordinary*
 means; and one man has actually
 proposed to take away the sixth
 part of every man's real property.
 Under such circumstances, is it
 likely, that you and Mr. Hob-
 house and Sir Robert Wilson and
 young Mr. Whitbread will be
 able, by *soft persuasion*, to pre-
 vail in the great families to make
 a Reform that would *put their*
estates into the hands of men,
chosen by the people at large?

You take a wrong view of the
 matter, if you proceed upon the
 notion, that *public opinion* has
 now its former weight. Since
 1816, this has been gradually be-
 coming of less and less conse-
 quence with those who have the
 management of the system. A
 military force, co-operating with
 a magistracy armed with new and
 extraordinary powers, and the
 whole more completely organized
 than almost any thing in the
 world ever was; these have di-
 vested the rulers of all *care* about
 any thing, except the *Debt*, its
 appendages and consequences.
 These, therefore, are the grounds
 to work on; and, if well worked
 on *in parliament*, a prodigious
 effect would be produced in a very
 short time. While, with regard
 to *Reform*, the old story, without

a new fact, and without a singlet petition to back you, what can be done?

There must arise, and, perhaps, during this next session of parliament, this question: *Whether the land-owners shall give up part of their estates to the Fundholders; or, whether the latter shall be ruined; while the former retain all their possessions.* Indeed, this question has been mooted already, even in the House. I beg you to believe, Sir, that this *mighty* question must be discussed, and that, too, at no distant day. I had my project, which, if I had not been opposed by cut-throats, at Coventry, I should have offered to the parliament in four days after its meeting. Mine was a very *extensive* project, at any rate. I must now be a mere spectator; but, this great question *between the land and the funds* must come to be discussed; and, whenever it shall come to be discussed, you will, unless you duly and diligently consider the matter beforehand, find yourself in greater difficulty than you have ever yet experienced. The thing will end in a Reform of the Parliament; but, your future character and fate will depend, not upon any talk about Reform, but upon the part that you shall take as to this great question. The fact is,

that the estates of the great families as well as of every body else, are, as the common notion is, pledged to pay the interest due to the fundholders: or, in other words, are *mortgaged* to the fundholders. There is a great arrear of interest; or, at least, the interest can no longer be duly paid, without producing an unbearable weight of national misery, and causing a degree of national feebleness which wholly disables the nation from daring to think of war, however just and necessary. This is the state of the case; and the question is, shall this load be shaken off, or not? Shall the mortgage bond be literally enforced; shall the mortgagees enter, and send the present occupiers on their travels; or, shall the occupiers be *protected* against the mortgagees, and leave these latter to live on air? This is the true and only question now to be discussed. Until it be settled, it is quite useless to make speeches against the *corruptions of Gram-pound*. Never, until this question be settled, will there be any Reform of Parliament. In short, the question is not "how long the *Borough* system will last," but how long the *Funding* system will last; and, therefore, those who appear anxious about the

former all about view either ing.

I can conclus during when, the par which ducing, to be mean to to belie to see would had ma measure finest o sented at least to do g frequen you alw sion; serious lie of taughtt their pu would y the par eight confiden with wh Reform consider

former, and say and do nothing at all about the latter, must, in my view of the matter, be wanting either in sincerity or understanding.

I can draw no very favourable conclusion from your *silence*, during the spring session of 1819, when, after repeated discussions, the parliament adopted a measure which has produced, and is producing, calamities so great as not to be described. They did not *mean* to do this. It is impossible to believe, that the Ministers *like* to see people miserable. They would have *listened* to you, if you had made a stand against that measure. It was the fairest and finest opportunity that ever presented itself of doing good; or, at least, of showing a disposition to do good. If you had spoken frequently, seriously, and ably (as you always can), upon that occasion; if you had, in a strain of seriousness and of generous sacrifice of all personal dislikes, besought the Ministers to desist from their pursuit, with what advantage would you *now* have come before the parliament! With what weight of character; with what confidence from your friends; and with what awe in your enemies! *Reform* is, and will be, by many, considered as a matter of *theory*,

and as nothing more. But, the *money-question*; that which comes home to the heart and soul of every person of property, be his property, of what nature it may, awakens thought and feeling in the most stupid and the most selfish. On this subject, you would have been attended to by the whole nation. It was *here* that you might have commanded the attention even of those, whom you call "the *Gentlemen of England*"; and who will never, for one single moment, listen to you on the subject of Reform, until the money-matter be brought to a crisis.

The matter was so *plain*, too: it was so *clear*, that the present sum of taxes never could be collected from a quantity of circulating medium, which would be small enough to enable the Bank to resume cash-payments. And the absurdity of collecting such a sum from a circulating medium of gold and silver was so palpable, that one wonders how you could let pass the occasion of making a great figure in an assembly, where you must desire to make such a figure. It was evident to me, that the ministers were *forced* into that measure. Their language clearly shewed, that they did not approve of it. Lord CASTLERBAGH spoke

of it in a very equivocal way; Mr. CANNING said, it was a subject *he did not understand*; and, Mr. PEEI, though he spoke with great ability, as he always does, spoke in a way, that showed him to have nothing better than *faint hopes* of success. This, therefore, was the great occasion for *you* to interpose; and yet, not a single word did you say upon the all-important subject.

You do not, Sir, appear to me to have any thing like a correct notion of the real state of the country, taking into view all the consequences that we may expect to see come to pass. It is not only the *misery of the people* that you ought to look at. These are not all; there are the *resources* of the country, the basis of its *power*, its means of defence; these are *passing away*! And, passing away, too, so manifestly as to be seen even by vulgar eyes. The nation is sinking faster, and a hundred times faster, than ever it rose. If this system could last for 10 years, this country would be the scorn of the world. She is, at this very moment, literally fulfilling a prediction, which the ABBE RAYNAL put into print more than thirty years ago. Every nation is fast

rising above her. In much less than ten years, if this system could continue, she would not be a match, *on the ocean*, for the United States of America single-handed. France will either undergo another Revolution, or will remain tranquil under her present not very bad government. In either case she will *recover* fast. Spain, in all human probability, will be on the *rise*. While, under the present system, it is *impossible* that this country should not go on *declining*. This country cannot hold a *middle course*. She cannot be *moderately* powerful. She must be *great* or *nothing*. She cannot quietly and silently enjoy mediocrity. She cannot be independent by permission. She must exist in *defiance* or *not exist at all*.

In this state of the country, what is the part that *you* ought to act? Why, cast aside, root completely from your mind, every feeling of private pique against every man engaged in public matters. Bend all your talent, weight and influence to assist in tearing off the load that presses your country downwards. There must be *sacrifices*, and very *great sacrifices*, not on the part of the middle

classes and the labourers, for they have sacrificed all; but, on the part of the *high and rich*; and who so well and effectually as you could preach the precept and *set the example*? It is not, Sir, by *electioneering and dinnering*, and obtaining little paltry triumphs over such poor things as Mr. LAMB and Mr. MELLISH, that you can assist in saving England.

A coalition with the *Whigs*, who, God knows, are a strange sort even of Whigs! A getting together of a little band to squabble and special plead against the Ministers is a thing that you ought to despise. You have been long enough in public affairs to understand well the state of the country; and, if you were, during the short time, that will, perhaps, be allowed you, to come forward, looking for support to no one, standing on your own character, and propose in a tone and manner of which you are complete master, some *great measure of salvation* for the country, accompanied with a *solemn warning* to the parliament and the people, you would

go to your prison, if it should, contrary to all our wishes, be finally determined to send you thither, accompanied with universal gratitude and with most earnest prayers for your health and your restoration to liberty.

But, I must reluctantly confess, that your *praises of the ministry of Mr. Fox*, as you called it, in your speech at LEICESTER, gave me but little hope as to your future conduct. You know, Sir, as well as I do, that Mr. Fox was not "at the head" of that ministry. You know well, that he had *no real power* in it. You know, too, that the acts of that ministry were even *more odious* (considering the length of time) than those of any other ministry that had preceded it; and you know, too, that "the Whigs," to a coalition with whom this compliment of yours was but too palpable an overture, have been, and are, as strongly opposed to Reform as their political opponents are. These circumstances, connected with your uncommon activity in supporting Mr. WHITBREAD, an object, in my opinion,

wholly unworthy of your attention, have gone far towards convincing me, that nothing great is intended by you; while I am certain, that nothing in the old, declamatory style will have the smallest tendency to produce good to the country.

The course which I think will be pursued is this: the people are put down. There is a body of horsemen in each county, called yeomanry, who are, at all times, ready to come forth. There is a regular army, very judiciously distributed all over the kingdom, with the deposits of arms, ammunition and artillery. And, observe, that the *ragings* of actual starvation are provided against in England in the *poor-rates*. Hence it is, that we hear of never-ending fightings in Ireland, while we hear of none in England. In time men learn to *live upon little*, and that little very bad food. The lascars at SAINT HELENA eat *rats* and *mice* with their rice; and seem, I am told, very well contented. Therefore, all is perfectly safe on

the score of the multitude, especially with the present laws in force.

But, *tranquillity* is not prosperity. Tranquillity will not pay rents and taxes. Tranquillity will not prevent the fatal effects of unproductiveness in labour. Tranquillity will not prevent the pressure of taxation from sapping the foundations of wealth and power. "The repose" of agriculture is death to it as completely as the repose of the sap is death to a plant or tree. All is suffering and perishing under this pressure. This is now acknowledged on all hands. Some propose to lessen the pressure by lopping off a part of the debt: others to make the land share in the lopping off: others, to lessen the pressure by again augmenting the quantity of the Paper-money, and, thereby, lessening the real amount of the taxes.

To resort to the last of these schemes, would, as an expedient, be the easiest; but, then, it would

be attended with so much *shame* in the beginning, and with ruin so certain in the end, that I can hardly think it will be attempted unless in a case of great emergency and even of alarm. To lop off a part of the debt, and to come to a compromise of some sort with the land, will, I think, be attempted. But here, as in all the late projects, there will, I dare say, be so much of *indecision*; and the *degree* will be so inadequate to the necessity of the case, that the measure, while it will cause a great and general alarm, will be attended with no very beneficial consequences.

But, the moment such measures are suspected to be entertained by the Ministers, an enormous *emigration of capital* will instantly take place. And *here* it is that we see one of the greatest of the many great evils of a FUNDING SYSTEM. It would seem at first glance, that a country really loses none of its riches, or means of being powerful, by a man's selling

his stock in the funds, and getting off to another country. But, let us see how the thing works. I have, suppose, a thousand pounds in the Funds; I sell them to some one for Bank notes; I buy gold with the Bank notes in London; and off I go *with the gold*. Thus, then, I get gold for the stock; the stock, which is, intrinsically worth nothing, I leave in England, and *I carry the gold out of England*. So that, by my removal, England's real riches and means of being powerful, are diminished in proportion to the amount of my late stake in the Funds. Take another mode of doing it. Instead of buying gold with my Bank notes, I buy *cloth* and take it out of the country. I sell it *abroad*, where I employ the money in trade or agriculture, or I lend it out. Nothing returns to *England* in lieu of the cloth. The cloth, which made part of the wealth of England, is *gone from her for ever*! And thus, by the operation, England is rendered poor and

feeble in proportion to the amount of my late property in the funds.

Therefore, the moment it was known, that the Ministers favoured any project for lowering the interest of the debt, a prodigious emigration of capital would take place, and the nation would, without great precaution previously taken, receive a blow that would actually make her stagger! Observe, too, that, in proportion to England's loss, would be the gain of some *rival*; and who that rival would principally be it is unnecessary for me to state. To be sure natural causes would, in a limited time, put an end to this transfer of capital; but, it is by no means beyond the compass of probability, that *two hundred millions* would thus be waisted from English to foreign shores; and that, too, in a very short space of time, producing misery and decrepitude here, and prosperity and power in rival states. There is a certain portion of the fundholders, who are, as it

were, *tied to the stake*, and must abide the peltings of the storm, be they what they may. But, many of them are not; and they will remove their capital. Nor is the removal of capital to be effected only in the case of funded property. One, who owns a farm, sells it to a fundholder for Bank notes; and away goes *the value* of the farm, never to come back again. The farm remains, to be sure; and all the farms and houses, all the mines and canals must remain; but the things which make them *valuable* may be removed, and, in a great measure, would, in the above supposed case, be removed for ever.

Now, is not *this* an object, before the terrific magnitude of which the getting of Mr. WHIRBREAD elected and the ousting of poor boggling MELLISH ought to sink out of sight? What is this young man likely to do? What is he calculated to do, in

order to prevent a catastrophe such as is above contemplated, and which, with great exertion and a mind made up to great sacrifices, such as your country has a claim on you for, you might do much, at any rate, towards preventing? At such a time as this; with dangers such as these hanging over the country; with clouds, charged with destruction, lowering over its head: at such a time as this, it is mortifying enough to see the Ministers employed in contriving traps and trammels for political writers; but it is still more mortifying to see you, with a parcel of brawling partizans, marching to Brentford, at the head of a goodly collection of "*free and independent voters*," riding in a boat drawn along the turnpike-road, in order to hasten the progress of the cause of Reform! When one sees these things, one can have little hope from your exertions.

But, still, we have a right to call upon you for exertions.

In the letter, for the writing and publishing of which you have been prosecuted, you observe, that gentlemen's estates are a *retaining fee* for their exertions in defence of the rights and liberties of the country. Though the figure savours too much of special-pleading, the sentiment is just. You, Sir, hold, then, a pretty *large fee* in this cause; of course, great exertions may be justly demanded at your hands; and, great and efficient exertions we must have, or, I for one, shall make heavy complaints against you. I am aware, that, in the present moment of electioneering triumphs while the *loud huzzas* are yet vibrating on your ear, you may be little disposed to attend to what any one may offer in the way of advice; but, after the noisy flattery has made way for stillness and reflection, the people who

think at all, will wait with some impatience for the *fruit* of their successful exertions in your behalf. They will see subjects of the utmost importance brought forward; they will expect to see *you*, above all men, taking a part in the discussion of those subjects; they will, when the question is, whether the land-owners shall or shall not yield up a part of their possessions, be eager to hear what *you* have to say; what proposition you have to make what *sacrifice* you have to offer; and, give me leave to assure you, that, though you may still continue to receive from some persons, that species of adulation, which the known possession of great wealth never fails to procure for the possessor, your weight, as a public man, will be nothing, unless you be thoroughly prepared for great exertions and great *sacrifices*.

Many are the years that have

passed over our heads since I endeavoured to prevail on you to grapple with the *Funding Monster*.

It has, ever since I began to write the Register, eighteen years ago, been my opinion, that the fate of the country depended on what should be done with this system.

This is *now* manifest to every one.

There is no man, be his general politics what they may, who does not now think, that a *breaking up* of some sort must take place.

This, therefore, is the *great subject*; and, if you be silent or inefficient here, the triumph of your election is an empty triumph; and, indeed, it will, in the end,

only tend to sink you into insignificance. If you act the part that

you are able to act, though your time in parliament may be short,

you may make every honest man in the kingdom follow you to your

prison with admiration and gratitude; which prison may then be

envied by those who inhabit pa-

laces. But, if you remain inert, or, if nothing specific, great and efficient mark even the short period that you may have for exertion, your prison will be merely a retreat from that public insignificance, which, to you, ought to be less tolerable than dungeons and manacles.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
THE EARL OF AYLSFORD.

London, 29 March, 1820.

MY LORD,

I shall not take any particular pains to characterize you or your conduct. A plain narrative will do what I want done, which is merely to show what *you are*, and to what a state of degradation the people of England are reduced.

On the 15th of March I went from Coventry to the Bull-head

Inn at the village of MERIDEN (which is five miles from Coventry) in the hope that a change of air would restore to me the use of my voice, which I had almost wholly lost by a cold, caught before I entered Coventry. I arrived there on the *Wednesday* afternoon. On the *Thursday*, the Landlord, Mr. HETHERINGTON, told me, that, while I was out on a walk, *you* had called to ask, whether I was in the house, and that, being told that I was, you told the landlord, that, you supposed, he did not expect to have *any connection with the gentlemen in the neighbourhood*. The landlord, when he told me of this, appeared rather *alarmed*; but he was somewhat roused and fortified, and appeared to feel that he was not quite destitute of a *soul*, when I spoke of you and your interference in terms of merited reprobation and contempt.

The next day, while I was out on another walk, the *Adjutant of the Warwickshire Yeomanry Ca-*

valry, of which, I am told, you are the Colonel, came, as the landlord told me, and, in true military style, demanded my *expulsion* from the Inn. The fellow, whose name is, they say, SMITH, was lately, I am told, a *Serjeant* in some Regiment of regular *Dra-goons*. This hero swore in grand style, and threatened tremendously. I could not hear this account without calling to mind the description, which FORTESQUE gives of the manner, in which the *French Soldiers* used to treat the people! it was so much like the manner of soldiers towards a people, who could call nothing their own, that I could hardly refrain from treating the landlord as a slave, when I heard, that he had not kicked the "*Adjutant*" out of his house. And, when he told me the story about *your* interference, I said to my son, "if he had interfered thus with an "*American* inn-keeper, how the "*latter* would have sent him

"across the road from the toe of "*his shoe!*"

When I came in from a walk, on the Saturday, the landlord came to me with an account of new complaints, and told me, that he had now been assailed by several persons, and had, at last, been threatened, that, unless he put me out of his house, he should have his licence taken away. That is to say, unless he would commit a gross violation of the law of the land, he should have taken from him the means of gaining his livelihood.

Having ordered dinner, the waiter informed us, that his master could not provide us with any thing more! Upon this I sent for the landlord, and told him in plain terms, that, if he was a slave, I was not; and, that, unless he supplied me with what I wanted, I would, in the first place, not pay him his bill, and, that, in the next place, I would bring an action against him. The poor man was exceedingly

distressed; but at last, we got some dinner. We returned to Coventry, according to my intention, in the evening, and, for that time heard no more of the matter.

The Landlord is a very civil and well-behaved man. He, probably, would have acted upon the word of command given by your Adjutant; but, he saw that there was danger to be apprehended from my *resentment*. I left MERIDEN feeling sorrow at seeing an ENGLISHMAN reduced to a state of such complete slavery; but, not without feeling some pride, that my bare presence near your dwelling had been capable of inspiring you with fear. You may come and reside at the Inn at Botley, and not a soul in the country will either know or care when you come or when you go away; or will ever hear who, or what, you are. What a poor thing, in the creation, *you are*, when compared to me! What an insignificant thing!

While this verbal altercation was going on at MERIDEN, there

was, it seems, something in the *documentary* way preparing, and we have it in the following article, which I copy from a Coventry News-paper:

COBBETT AT MERIDEN.

We, the under-signed Inhabitants of Meriden and its Neighbourhood, in order to manifest our *abhorrence and detestation* of the *Principles of Cobbett* and his Adherents, do hereby publicly express our *astonishment and disgust* at the conduct of the Proprietors of the Bull's Head Inn, in *having entertained him for so long a time, contrary to our general feelings and loyal spirit*; and further declare that we neither have had nor will have any *connection* with Cobbett.

Aylesford

E. Finch

W. Somerville

Thomas Smith

Joseph Gibbs

John Beaufoy

Robert Bunney

William Zachary
 Humphrey Harper
 Thomas Johnson
 Benjamin Lees
 John Sabin
 J. Alsager
 H. B. Bellisson
 W. Sabin
 William Repton
 John Dodwell
 Samuel Thompson, sen.
 Samuel Thompson, jun.
 Thomas Phillips
 John Loveitt
 Thomas Oldham
 George Proctor
 John Downing
 S. Large
 Elizabeth Wiggin
 Thomas Shuttleworth
 William Gibson
 John Guise
 John Perks
 William Taylor, Constable
 Robert Taylor.

Meriden, March 8, 1820.

Thus do you stand enrolled with
 your Dragoon Serjeant, with

tailors, shoemakers, pot-house
 people, the constable of the village,
 and with a parcel of the basest of
 mankind, renting English farmers.
 But, to talk to you of *meanness* is
 to throw words away. Here is a
 goodly group to disclaim all *con-*
nection with me! You might have
 stopped till you had been *asked* to
 form such a *connection*, of which I
 should never have thought, unless
 I had been reduced to a state to
 "say unto Corruption, thou art
 "my father; and, to the Worm,
 "thou art my mother and my
 "sister."

There can be no doubt, that *you*
 drew up this paper, and sent
 your Adjutant with the word of
 command to obtain the signatures;
 and that the sole object, or, at
 least, the main object of the paper,
 thus *published*, was to cause the
ruin of the man, who, only in
obedience to the law, had given me
 my *right* to lodging and entertain-
 ment. Since, however, you state,
 that your object is, to "express

"your *abhorrence and detestation*
"of the principles of Cobbett,"
 it may not be amiss, not to ask
you what those principles are,
 but shortly to state them for the
 information of the poor, slavish
 curs, whom you got to join you in
 your impudent, silly, and yet
 malignant manifesto.

My principles, then, are as
 follows.—I hold, that it is the
 duty of us all to do our utmost to
 uphold a government in king,
 lords, and commons. That, as to
 religion, opinions ought to be left
 as God has made them in our minds,
 perfectly free, and that persecution
 on account of religious opinions
 is of the worst and most wicked
 kind. That no man ought to be
 taxed but by his own consent,
 agreeably to the law of the land.
 That elections ought to be free,
 and that drunkenness, bribery,
 corruption, and perjury are great
 and odious sins. That the affairs
 of the nation ought to be so
 managed, that every sober and

industrious and healthy man ought,
 out of his own wages, to be able
 to support himself, wife and family
 in a comfortable and decent man-
 ner. That the law of nature, as
 well as the law of the land, give
 every soul in the community a
right to a sufficiency of food and
 raiment; and that, those who
 possess the land, are justly called
 upon to give good support to all,
 who are unable to labour, or who,
 being able, cannot obtain employ-
 ment; and that this support is
 not a thing *given*, but a *right* to be
 demanded in the name of the law.
 I hold, further, that a false, or
 paper-money, not convertible into
 gold and silver on demand made
 on the issuer of the paper, is one
 of the greatest scourges ever in-
 flicted upon a nation. I hold,
 that it is the weight of taxes,
 which produces all the miseries,
 which this nation now suffers, and
 that these taxes go, in part, to keep
 sinecure placemen and place-
 women, pensioners and grantees,
 of whose public services I can find

no trace. I hold, that the Debt and other fixed expences are a mortgage (in the present operation) on the labour of every man, woman and child in the country, capable of labour: that, thus, in part, the food and raiment are necessarily taken from those who labour and given to those who do not labour; and this is the cause of great suffering amongst the people. I hold, that, unless a great change speedily take place, this nation will become feeble and contemptible as well as enslaved; and that its capital will be conveyed away to enrich and to give power to rival nations.

Now, these are amongst my principles, of which you express your abhorrence and detestation! But, are you sure, that you were quite sincere? Did you tell the poor curs, who barked at your nod, that your real ground of anger against me was, that I had pointed out your uncle, EDWARD FINCH (who signs the paper) as A GROOM OF THE BED

CHAMBER at five hundred pounds a year; while, at the same time, he enjoys the emoluments as the Colonel of a Regiment in the standing army in time of peace? Are you quite sure, that my account of Mrs. ARABELLA WALKER HENEAGE, who is Chief Proclamator in the Court of Common Pleas, at a hundred pounds a year; and Chief Usher in the Exchequer, at a hundred and thirty seven pounds a year: are you quite sure, that my statement of, and my laughing at, these facts, relating to a most high-blooded, and, doubtless, delicate, personage: are you quite sure, that all this had nothing to do in setting in motion the noble gall of you, Heneage Finch, Earl of Aylsford? If you decline to answer this question, it is very likely, that the poor curs of Meriden may answer it for you, in whispers to one another, at any rate. They will not (at present) dare to speak

out; but, you must be even more foolish than this act of yours would seem to indicate, if you suppose, that you have any thing on your side, in this case, except what is extorted by *fear of your power to do mischief to the poor slavish creatures*. Let them find, one of these days, that they no longer need entertain that *fear*; and they will soon make you know the extent of their respect and affection.

I have, for my own part, no reason to be displeased with you. You have done all that lay in your pitiful power to add to my fame, consequence, and weight of character. You have shewn, that you were afraid that I should *be*, merely *be*, within miles of your dwelling; and few men are such fools as not to perceive the grounds of that fear. My bare existence near you was a cause of trouble to your mind! What

a sort of life to lead! I would not live under such apprehensions for ten such estates as yours. You would do well, I believe, to shift your fears from me to the *Fundholders*, who, if I mistake not, will soon let you see, that there is something in the world more dangerous to you than "the principles of Cobbett." If my principles had been acted upon, instead of the principles of my bitter foes, you would, at this day, have had no cause to fear that which is to come. My principles, long ago upon record, would have effectually prevented all the present dangers. But you "*abhor and detest*" those principles: take, therefore, the *consequences*, while I stand by and *laugh*. Good bye. Look after your hares and pheasants; and wait for the visit of the *Fundholders*.

WM. COBBETT.

MR. CANNING'S MANIFESTO.

The next Register will contain *An Answer to Mr. Canning's Speech*, made, after his election, at Liverpool. This is a set *Manifesto against the reformers*. It has been published in three successive numbers of the COURIER! It is a very elaborate composition, and shall receive an elaborate answer. The Right Honourable Gentleman has done his best to defend his conduct and that of his colleagues; and he certainly has dealt the *Whigs* some good sound blows, warranted fully by truth and justice; but his Manifesto must have an answer from me; for, indeed, he and his colleagues and their system have no other real opponent. The contest, as far as arguments go, is simply between the system and me; and, what is pleasing in the extreme to

me, is, that the contest must very soon be decided. I shall, in a short time, see whole descriptions of persons that have cordially joined in uttering execrations against me, divided, ranged against each other, and ready to tear each other to pieces. The land and the funds must come to an open rupture in the end. However, I am anticipating. I must touch upon this in my answer to the *Manifesto*.

MR. HUNT'S TRIAL.

MR. HUNT, MR. JOHNSON, and three others have been convicted, at York. They were indicted for a conspiracy; but, the verdict appears to have been given in the following words: "*Guilty* of assembling, "with unlawful banners, an "unlawful meeting, for the

“ purpose of exciting discon-
 “ tent and disaffection in the
 “ minds of the liege subjects of
 “ our Sovereign Lord the King,
 “ against the Government and
 “ Constitution of this Realm as
 “ by law established, and of at-
 “ tending at the said meeting.”

—To make *remarks* upon this
 affair is much *too delicate* a
 task for me. The JUDGE (Bai-
 ley) reprov'd Mr. Hunt more
 than once, for *culogizing* him.
 I will take good care not to
 expose myself to reproof *on the*
same ground. Some of the pa-
 pers talked of a new trial. I

do not know on *what ground*.
 I am far, thank God, from be-
 ing a lawyer; but, I know, that
 the place of trial was the place
chosen by the defendants: that
the verdict was in consonance with
the Judge's charge: and that
 the conduct of the Judge has
 been *praised to the skies* by Mr.
 Hunt (if the newspapers speak
 truth) and by all the public
 prints. However, there may be
 other grounds for a new trial;
 and, at any rate, I hope, that
 I may, without exposing my-
 self to the chance of banish-
 ment, express my deep sorrow
for the result of this trial.

THE SPANISH CONSTITUTION.

SPANISH CONSTITUTION.

We told our readers, that the *Taxeating crew* were ready to cut the throats of the Spaniards! Their rage has been swelling within them for several weeks; but, at least, it has bursted out from their mouth, the *COURIER* of Tuesday night.—He gives a sketch of the Constitution of Spain, which he prefaces by a set of remarks of his own. We will insert the remarks, and afterwards make some observations on them.

“The late news from Spain has been received with very general exultation in this country by all descriptions of persons, from an erroneous supposition that the Government of Ferdinand has been superseded by a mode-

rate limited Monarchy, modelled very much upon our Constitution. But this is very far from being the case. The code formed at Cadiz in 1811, 1812, and now forced upon the King, is only nominally Monarchical; it is in reality almost purely republican; and it would have been well, if, in these times, its real merits and tendencies had been duly considered, before we had ventured to praise its supporters, or admire its imaginary excellence. The basis of the system of representation is Universal Suffrage and Biennial Parliaments, together with all the other wild theories of Radical Reform.”

Oh, oh! We must not, then, like this Spanish form of Government, because it is *not like ours!* Indeed! What, must we like nothing that does not contain a provision for rotten-bo-

roughs? We must not like it, because there is no room for *seat selling*. We must suspect, that it will end badly, because it will not permit of long lists of *Sinecure Placemen and Place-women*! The *COURIER* exclaims: "this constitution is very far from being like ours." Aye, is it? It is only "nominally monarchical." Indeed! It is almost "purely republican." Bless us! It is "universal suffrage and two-year Parliaments." Worse and worse!—It is "Radical Reform." The devil it is!—Will this thing, call it what you please, give the people a belly full of food in exchange for their labour? Will it prevent a National Debt amounting to a thousand millions? Will it prevent a Paper-money from cursing the land? Will it prevent the people from dying with hunger in the streets, and others from being harnessed like horses to draw gravel carts? Will it prevent salt (worth a shilling) from being paid for by the labourer at *twenty-shillings*? Will it prevent the people from petitioning to be transported, in order to

save themselves from actual starvation?

Will it prevent thundering standing armies in time of peace? Will it prevent the passing of *Dungeon Bills* and *Gagging Bills* and *Disarming Bills* and *Binding Over Bills* and *Banishment Bills*? Because, if it will do these things, or almost any one of them, we hail its adoption with all our hearts and souls! Faith it is a *choaker* for all the despots in Europe, and all who may wish to be despots. It is a *sickener* to them. It will *creep about*, and will do the more good because it makes *little noise*.—We are happy to perceive, that the *COURIER* does not recommend a war against this *new republic*, though it has, as he says, "been forced upon the king." Oh, no! Our government (bless it!) is *too modest* to think of *interfering* in the internal affairs of other nations!

"Big John Bull, of paper empty,

"Though in midst of peace and plenty,

"Is modest grown as worn-out sinner."

The French Prime Minister is said to have railed, some days ago, against

the Spanish Revolution, because *effected by soldiers!* Well done, Monsieur! But, *who* was it that restored the Bourbons, Monsieur! Had *soldiers* nothing to do with that, Monsieur! Aye, Monsieur, and *foreign soldierstoo!* And who was it brought about our "Glorious Revolution?" Had *soldiers* nothing to do with that Monsieur? Did not our "deliverer," William, Prince of Orange (*Orange Boven*) come over with a *Dutch Army*, Monsieur?—Take care how you gabble, Monsieur, against *soldiers* making changes in governments. But, gabbling Monsieur, remember, that the thing has been done in Spain, not by English, Prussians, Austrians, Russians and Dutchmen, but by soldiers, *natives of Spain*, who thought, as all soldiers ought to think, that their first duty was to defend the liberties of their country. Adieu, Monsieur! Bear these things in mind, and then you will have a guard on your tongue, and the COURIER will not be able to give us such silly extracts from your gabble to the Chamber. Adieu, Monsieur; use the

French well; make no attempt to restore the feudal claims and the tythes, and then you need not be afraid of the effects of this glorious change in Spain. — We have not yet heard how this event has affected the Borough gentlemen in the score of *religion*, a matter, with regard to which they are always peculiarly alive. They do, indeed, when an extension of liberty to the Catholics of Ireland is prayed for, exclaim "no popery," and remind us of the *fires in Smithfield*: yet, we could venture to bet a trifle, that they will cry aloud against the "*sacrilegious*" act of putting down the Inquisition and extinguishing its *holy* fires. We remember well how they cried out "*sacrilege*," when the gormandizing and debauched Monks of France were ousted from their dormitories. The old PAPA of Rome, whom the parson of the parish, when we were boys, used to call *Anti-Christ*, has been a great favourite of late years; and yet it is very odd, that we will not admit of his spiritual power being exercised in *Ireland!* This is a very odd

thing.
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Prin

thing. We could explain the mystery, we think; but, it is hardly worth while. — Let the *Tax-eaters* rail on. The work of Reform will proceed in spite of their railing. Again and again we say, that there is no money now to be spent to carry on war against other nations because they choose to change the form of their governments. *France* will derive great benefit from the Spanish Revolution; and every country in Europe will hail the event with heartfelt joy.

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